

INFORMATION REPORT

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Transshipment Point

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1. The Slovakian Customs posts are subordinated to the Commissariat of Finance (Poverenictvo financi - PF), Section IV/14. The customs posts of the Slovakian Soviet border are at Cierna pri Cope (railway) and at Sobrance (road). The customs post at Sobrance is used only by diplomats crossing the border, and no goods are taken across there. The post at Cierna pri Cope is used for such deliveries, and the station there (the last one in Slovakia) is connected with the Russian station at Mukacevo (Carpathian Ukraine) by standard-gauge and broad-gauge tracks.
2. In most cases freight being transported from Czechoslovakia into the USSR is transshipped from Czech into Russian cars and the customs examination is carried out at the same time. The official accompanying the Czech goods hands them over to the Soviet authorities in the station at Cierna pri Cope, the Soviet authorities being frontier officials and MVD officials in civilian clothes. If the consignment is not in order when it is handed over, it is immediately sent back. Certain goods are not transshipped in Cierna; the Czech cars are taken to Mukacevo, and the transshipment is done by the Russians and the empty freight cars sent back to Cierna. The cars have through waybills and Czech and Russian seal seals, and these are taken on to Mukacevo without handing over or check. In this case Russian personnel take over the full cars at Cierna and bring back the empty ones; the Czech railway personnel are not allowed to cross the frontier. Russian locomotives are used.
3. The goods arriving from the USSR are principally grain and cotton, which are transshipped in Cierna. The customs clearance is very simple: the quantity only is noted, but no customs dues are paid. Goods imported from the USSR are sent on to their ultimate destination almost without check. The transshipment is done by various means. There are cranes, but the bulk of the work is done by hand. Grain is transferred from Russian into Czech cars by means of a wooden chute. There are brigades of workers for this purpose, but the wages are very low, being only 16 Kcs per ton of grain. The goods are taken on both by rail and by motor transport.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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4. The capacity of the Russian railway cars is 60 tons (sic). The Czech railway authorities have tried out cars which are adaptable for use either on standard gauge or on broad-gauge tracks, but these did not prove practical because though in theory the adjustment can be carried out in twenty minutes, it takes in practice as much as two hours. The device to hold the wheels at the required gauge is not reliable, and the Russians are very reluctant to take such cars over at the frontier.

5. The engineers from Russia arrive in a very exhausted state. In Cierna the Russians have taken over several rooms for the men to sleep and for offices. Russian officials constantly interfere in the Czech railway operations at the marshalling yards. Russian officers and MVD men drive the men who are doing the unloading relentlessly.

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